
CHARGE.

A CHARGE

DELIVERED

TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

Diocese of Quebec,

IN THE YEAR 1820,

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND

JACOB,

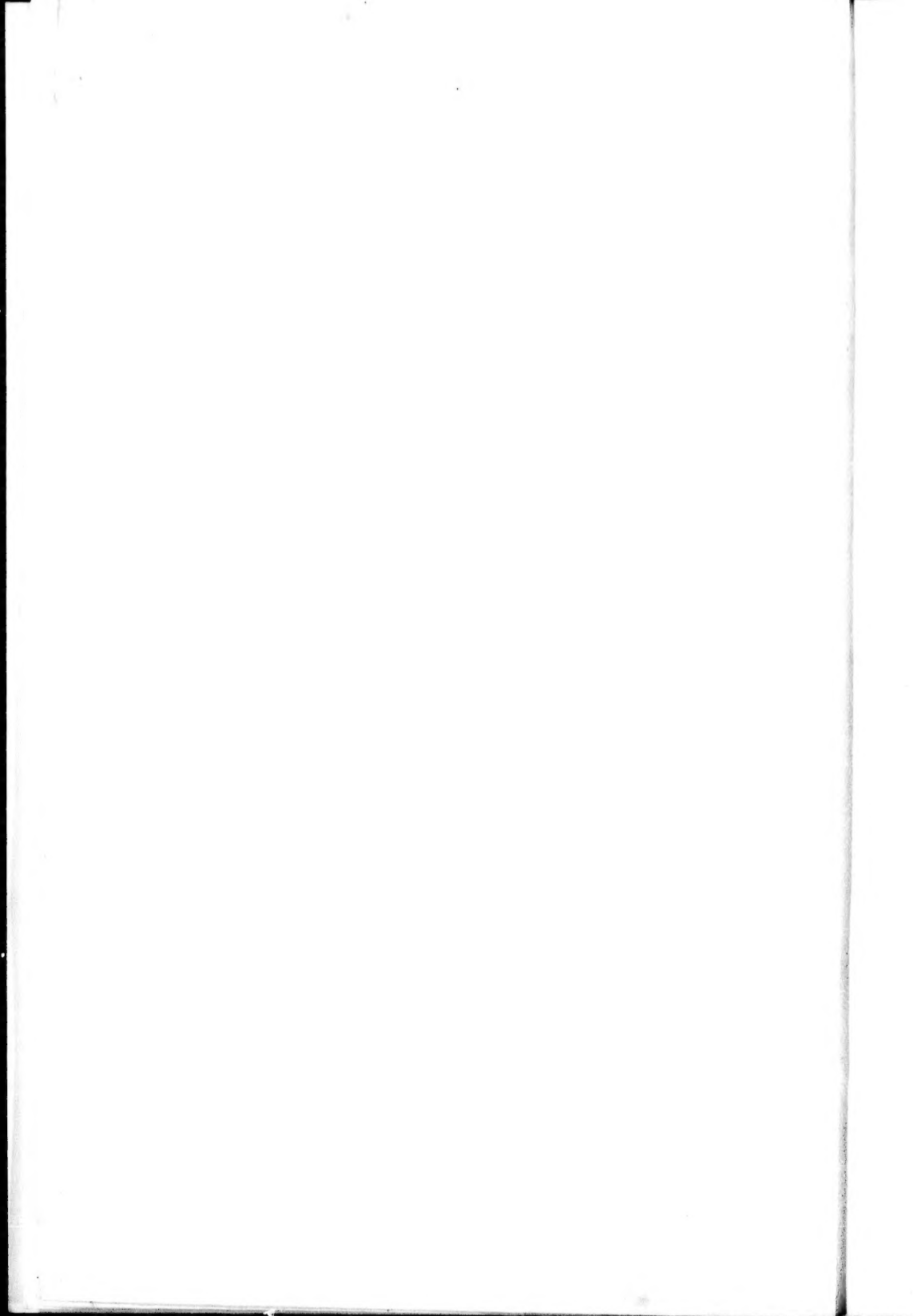
LORD BISHOP OF THAT DIOCESE.

QUEBEC :

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1820.



TO THE

RT. REVD. FATHER IN GOD,

Jacob, Lord Bishop of Quebec, &c.

May it please your Lordship,

WE, the Clergy of this division of the Diocese of Quebec, beg leave to offer your Lordship our sincere congratulations, on this our first general meeting in this Province under your Lordship's paternal governance.

Nearly thirty years have elapsed, since your Lordship entered upon the arduous task of diffusing the light of the Gospel through this extensive portion of His Majesty's dominions. You saw it a wilderness with few inhabitants, and only three Clergymen within its bounds. Now the population is becoming great : Churches are springing up, and the growing desire of the people to be taught the principles of Christianity, through the
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medium of the established Church, cannot fail of conveying the most delightful pleasure to your Lordship's mind.

Tho' much yet remains to be done, the number of grateful Clergymen, who now surround your Lordship, proves that the great difficulties of commencement have been long overcome—and a foundation laid which we hope, under the Divine Blessing, operating on our united labours, will increase the Church more and more, not only in the number of her faithful Children, but in piety and zeal for God in Christ Jesus, and that her branches will spread through all these Western Regions, and shew to an affectionate people the benefits of that happy establishment, which has been for ages the admiration of the Christian world.

We feel great satisfaction in being able to congratulate your Lordship on presiding at the first meeting of the corporation for superintending the Clergy Reserves within this Province—reserves, which have been munificently appropriated for the maintenance of a Protestant Clergy by our late gracious Sovereign, and we rejoice in the prospect which this opens to us, of the rapid increase of the regular clergy, and of the speedy accomplishment of those other plans for the support and dissemination of the true religion, which your Lordship has so much at heart, and has done so much to obtain.

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In presenting our thanks to your Lordship for the Charge now delivered, we feel a confidence in promising through the Divine aid, that the able and eloquent exposition of our duty, which it contains, will be illustrated in our future conduct, that we shall endeavour to practise every precept and exhibit in our lives every virtue, which it recommends. And in order that our endeavours may prove the more effectual, we request* a copy to assist us in defending the distinguishing doctrines of our venerable Church, against the ancient corruptions on the one hand, and modern innovations on the other, in tempering our zeal with charity and discretion, while we courageously repel that spurious moderation, which abandons what is essential to the soundness of the Faith, or the purity of discipline, for the false and hollow praise of modern liberality.

We are deeply affected with the intimation that this, in all probability, will be the last time that your Lordship will visit this province. But we fondly hope that it will yet be long, before the kind and affectionate relation, which subsists between your Lordship and us will be severed. And in the mean time our earnest prayers for your safety attend you on your journey ; and we assure ourselves that future times will have reason to bless the

* A similar request was made by the Clergy of the Lower Province, at the Visitation held at Montreal.

the first Bishop of Quebec ; by whose exertions a fair foundation has been laid for the diffusion of Christianity, through this extensive Province, according to the Apostolic principles of the Church of England ; which, arrayed in her beautiful garments, is turning darkness into light, and sowing those seeds of righteousness and truth, which shall spring up, and bloom for ever.

GEORGE OKILL STUART,

*Bishop's Official for Upper Canada,
and Chairman.*

The Bishop's Answer.

NOTHING could have been more gratifying to me, my reverend brethren, then the sentiments which you have now expressed.

I derive high satisfaction, and heart-felt comfort, from the manner in which you have received the advice which I thought it my duty to give you : and, next to these, it is most pleasing to me to be assured of your affectionate regard, and to observe that you repose entire confidence in mine, My Charge shall be printed,

I earnestly pray God to take you all under his parental protection, and immediate guidance,

CHARGE.



MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

ALTHO' twenty-seven years have elapsed, since, by Divine permission, I was appointed Bishop of this Diocese, and altho' I have, at different periods, passed eight times through these extensive Provinces,—as far at least as the establishment of Clergymen of our Church in the different parts of them required, and the circumstances of the times permitted,—to confer Confirmation, and make myself acquainted with the situation of the Clergy, and the spiritual wants of the people ; yet this is the third occasion only, upon which I have called my Clergy together for the purpose of holding a regular Visitation.

That the omission of this part of my Episcopal duty has not been caused by any indulgence to myself, the number of my visits will sufficiently evince : and it will hardly be necessary for me now to repeat the assurance which I gave several years ago, that I have not passed by this function of my office, from any want of just estimation of its importance, but because your number having been

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until of late too limited to make it fit that I should hold Visitations in different parts of my Diocese, I must have called many of you from very remote situations, and thereby have occasioned you to leave your Cures for a considerable length of time, without the possibility of getting your place supplied, during your necessary absence.

On this ground, I thought myself justified, in departing from the regular observance of a duty, which I could not have discharged more frequently, without inconveniences, that appeared to outweigh the advantages to be attained by it.

By the blessing of God, our numbers are augmented. And I have now deemed it reasonable, and right, to call for the attendance of my Clergy, of this Province, at* this place ; which, upon the whole, appeared best suited to the occasion.

As at my time of life, it cannot reasonably be expected, that I should ever meet you again upon a similar occasion, I shall now enter more minutely than I might otherwise have thought it necessary to do, into the consideration of the general duties of your office ; and touch upon some of those, that arise out of your particular situation ; and shall give you the best advice that I can, as to the most effectual manner of discharging them.

You

* York, in Upper-Canada, and Montreal, in Lower-Canada.

You will feel, I think, that in doing this, I act only in conformity to the relation which I bear to you ; and therefore will not imagine me to suspect, either that you are not competent to the duties of your office, or not disposed to perform them, if, in the plainest and most direct manner, I endeavour to place them before you. It is my part, to “ put you in remembrance of these things ” ; it is yours, to afford me, (as I have no doubt but you will) your serious, and patient attention.

I will begin with that, which, although it be of more particular concern to the younger persons among you, should yet not be lost sight of by any,—Habitual study of the Word of God. If “ to be ready to give a reason of the faith that is in him,” be required of every Christian, as far as his capacity, and means extend, how much more necessary is such knowledge to him who undertakes to be the Instructor of others :—If commendation were bestowed upon the Bereeans, because they “ searched the Scriptures daily,” to see whether the things taught them, were conformable to those Scriptures, how much more imperative must it be upon those who are themselves to teach, to do this, with unremitting diligence, that they may promulgate nothing, which is not promulgated by the Word of God, and omit nothing which that Word has inculcated, as conducive to salvation.

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In studying the Bible, you will of course avail yourselves of those helps which sound Biblical criticism, and able commentary so plentifully afford. You will also, without doubt, feel that a competent acquaintance with Ecclesiastical History cannot properly be dispensed with. I need not press these points upon you. But it may be useful to direct your attention to the expediency of cultivating, what some choose to call, mere human learning, also. There is a growing habit,—and it is not entirely confined to Separatists,—of affecting to despise such learning, as altogether vain, and useless. You will judge more liberally, I trust, and more correctly.

The advantage of a competent acquaintance with the languages in which the Word of God has been delivered down to us, cannot be questioned: nor will that, which results from reading in their native tongue, the writings of those Fathers, from whom may be derived a distinct knowledge of the belief, and practice, of the primitive Christians, and of the constitution, and government, of the earliest Churches, be denied by any persons, at all qualified to judge upon the subject. Be assured, that they who successfully apply themselves to these studies, will find their industry very amply, and very richly rewarded.

A knowledge of profane, as well as of sacred
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History ; of natural Philosophy ; of the higher, and better parts of general literature ; unquestionably deserves your attention, and regard. The *degree* in which this knowledge is to be cultivated, will necessarily depend much upon previous education, the native powers of the mind, and the leisure that is enjoyed for reading : and, in all cases, it is to be made to subserve your Professional studies, and to be applied to your greater advancement in them ;—and, this being understood, it must surely be admitted, that all that has power to increase the comprehensive grasp of the mind ; all, that helps to furnish it with just principles of thinking, reasoning, and judging ; all that enlarges, and strengthens, its capacity for observation, and reflection ; all that makes it better acquainted with the character, transactions, feelings, and passions of men ; and all that prepares it for an intelligent contemplation of the works, and of the word of God, and of his dealings with his creatures,—in his Dispensations of nature, and of Grace,—must contribute to enrich the students' stores of eminently useful matter,—matter peculiarly applicable to his purposes, who, as he is to know the Law, which he is commissioned to teach, should also know the Nature, to which that Law is to be applied. Such materials must be highly valuable in the hands of him, whose office it is, to guide the human will, and correct the human heart : whose
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main ambition it should be, to become “ a master in Israel ” ; prepared “ to bring out of his treasures, things new, and old ” ; “ a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” You must, I am sure, be satisfied, that the acquisition of such knowledge will turn greatly to your account, as Teachers of Religion ; since it will greatly improve in you that talent, of all others to you the most desirable, the talent of rendering instruction at once more intelligible, more acceptable, and more effectual, to the persons you address.

But if you can doubt this,—look at the effects of the entire absence of that knowledge, as they shew themselves in those self-appointed Teachers, who assume to be above it. Observe how rapidly they proceed from error, to error : how boldly they discuss, and how confidently they decide upon questions of the deepest, and most difficult research, and which they possess no single qualification that can enable them fairly to examine : observe that extravagance of enthusiasm, which, however acceptable it may be to the multitude, is but a miserable excuse for the mischiefs introduced, by ignorance, and folly.

An application of the mind to the study of the Bible, even if it be sincere, and ardent, without that previous improvement of the understanding,
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and the judgment, which is derived from general knowledge,—however satisfactory the result may be to the student himself,—will rarely be found to qualify him to enlighten, and direct, the minds of others. An attempt, so to master sacred learning, as to become an able *Expounder* of the Word of God, accompanied by a disdain, or neglect, of the necessary *preparation* of other learning, tends rather, (and more especially where there is a large portion of self-opinion), to bewilder, than to enlighten; to plunge men into depths of controversy, which they are utterly unable to fathom, and urge them to the attempt of explaining, what, without a miracle, it is impossible that they should comprehend; for all difficulties vanish, before those, whose imaginations are stricken by the notion, that they are favoured with special illumination,—by the immediate, and sensible operation, of Divine grace.

A careful study of your Bible, conducted in the manner which I have recommended, will be your best security against errors of this, or of any other kind.

But the Ministers of our Church have a further advantage,—(and I trust you will consider it as an important one),—in the Articles, the Liturgy, and the Rubricks of that Church. You will not suppose me to place these upon a level with the revealed

ed Word of God :—far, very far, from it :—but in their degree, and as subservient to that Word, they stand,—though infinitely below it,—yet next to it, in affording distinct, and comprehensive instructions, (as far as human wisdom permitted, and the subject was susceptible of it), for fixing the due boundaries of opinion, in matters of faith, and doctrine ; in elucidating the nature of the several functions of the Ministry ; and in laying down rules for the right manner of performing them.

The more intimately therefore you make yourselves acquainted with these,—the more carefully you trace their origin, their history, and their mutual connection ;—the more you seek out the true intent and meaning of those excellent persons who composed them ;—the more you observe the manner in which they bear upon matters at that time in controversy,—and in which they are applicable to controversies of the present day ;—the more will you perceive their wisdom, their moderation, their truly Christian spirit ; the more will you be edified by their piety, and comforted and supported by their authority ; and the more competent will you become, to the regular, and effectual discharge, of every part of your duty.

As Ministers of the Church of England, you will, I am persuaded, feel all the weight, and value, of these considerations. You will reflect, that

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as the general duties of the Pastoral Office are first to be sought, in such instructions as are to be collected, from the lessons given by our Saviour, in the Gospel, and the directions furnished by his Apostles in their Letters ; and from the objects of the sacred ministry, as they are there delivered ; so, in the application of these, to present circumstances, and to actual practice, they can only with perfect safety and satisfaction to yourselves, be regulated, by the Laws, and Constitutions, of that pure branch of the Church of Christ, to which you have the happiness to belong,—the Established Church of England.

Enough, I trust, has been said upon this head :—let us now turn to another.

You are *Preachers* of the Word of God :—and it greatly concerns you, carefully to consider in what manner this important duty is best to be performed.

It should certainly be a main object with you, fully to lay before your people, the *great, distinguishing, fundamental doctrines* of the Religion of Christ. They will be found capable of understanding them, if they are clearly, and distinctly placed before them :—to deem otherwise, would be in effect to call in question the wisdom of Him, who promulgated them to the world.

The knowledge which they will thus obtain, will best guard them against the influence of enthusiasm ; and most effectually fix in their minds, a just sense of the great sinfulness of schism, and of the wide-spreading mischiefs of separation from the Church.

It should also be an object with you, occasionally, and at proper seasons, to state, and explain, the *main Evidences*, of the Truth of the Christian Religion. If this be done with simplicity, and perspicuity, there will, here also, be found sufficient intelligence among the people to apprehend it ; and they will not fail to reflect upon it with advantage. This,—I say,—occasionally ; and at intervals. But the great articles of faith,—and the admirable precepts of our Saviour,—by which the duty, and the necessity, of purity, and piety, of benevolence, and usefulness, are so powerfully enforced, must be constantly, and earnestly inculcated.

A true faith must lay the foundation of every thing : But you will not suffer yourselves to be deterred, or discouraged, by the stale, and false accusation, of being mere *moral* Teachers,—by the groundless reproach of not preaching the *Gospel*,—from pressing, in the most decided manner, the obligation of *obedience* to the *Commandments* of *Christ* ; the necessity, of that strictly *virtuous*, and *moral* conduct, by which the Christian is to shew
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his faith ; of those “ good fruits,” which form the only evidence, that the “ tree is good” ; and which, tho’ not a cause, are an indispensable condition, of salvation.

Our self-stiled Evangelical Preachers, are too apt to overlook these obligations,—obvious, and incontrovertible as they are.

They appear not to have taken the proper distinction, between the Gospels, and the Epistles, of the New Testament.

In the former, we are taught, by our Saviour himself, the faith that he requires, and the duties which he demands from us. The Instruction is direct ; and of universal obligation. The latter, are in a considerable degree controversial : they are Letters addressed, both to particular Churches, and to certain individuals, on particular occasions ; and were intended to correct misapprehension, to confute Heresy, to prescribe Regulations in the Church, and to reprove individual error, and offence.

Yet these Writers,—and none more frequently, or more energetically than St. Paul,—seize upon every occasion that offers, to press the indispensable necessity, of sanctity of life, and manners, and of the practice of charity, and good works : And, duly, highly, and reverently, as we must venerate

St.

St. Paul, we are surely still more reverently to venerate our adorable Saviour. "Go ye (said He to his Apostles) and teach all nations." In *what manner* were they to be taught? *How* were the Apostles, and *how* are we to teach? We are to take *His* teaching, surely, as a model,—*infinitely* as we must ever fall short of it :—We are to teach, as to our subject matter,—at an *infinite* distance certainly,—but still, as far as it is practicable, we are to teach, as *He* taught.

Now it should be observed, that the only entire Sermon which we have of His, is wholly *practical*.

Now how does this matter stand with many of our adversaries?

Of them it may be said, I think, without breach of charity, that "they are of Paul." You hear little of our Saviour's practical precepts ;—but, from the *controversial* parts of *St. Paul's* Epistles,—and from those parts too, (regardless of the warning voice of St. Peter), which "are hard to be understood," they take their entire notions, of the Religion of Christ ; their standard of faith ; and their unintelligible rule of life. "Be not ye, like unto them."

I quit this subject, for the present :—but shall touch upon it again, when I come to speak of duties

ties resulting from the circumstances peculiar to your situation.

The effect produced by your Discourses, will in a considerable degree, depend, upon a judicious choice of subjects.

Before you compose your sermons, you should study the character and disposition ; and closely observe, the spiritual wants, and general capacity, of the people whom you address.

I do not mean that, on any of these accounts, you are to withhold from them any portion of “ the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus ” ;—that you are not to lay before them the *whole Gospel* of Christ ;—but that, for the most part, and as far you find it practicable, you are to adapt your preaching to that state of information, of opinion, and of practice,—to those powers, and habits, in short, of thought, and action,—which you discover to prevail amongst them :—Without this, however orthodox your Discourses may be, however able your argument, however eloquent your language, having no fixed aim, you will either rise above their comprehension, or go beside their expectations, and their wants. Should you deal in metaphysical subtleties, for instance, beyond the reach of their comprehension ;—should you enlarge upon the malignity of vices, that have no existence among them, and

and to which they have no temptation ; or dwell frequently upon duties, either out of the sphere of their action, or willingly practised by them ;—your labours would be fruitless ; and your reasoning, and your eloquence, would be wholly thrown away.

Without adding to, or subtracting from, the matter contained in the Gospel, you can find no difficulty in selecting, (and should most frequently handle,) such topics of Discourse, as will best furnish you with the means, of feeding your flock “ with *food convenient* for them” ;—of explaining what is imperfectly understood ;—of correcting erroneous opinion ;—of rousing indifference from its dangerous slumber ;—of repressing the extravagance of enthusiasm ;—of meeting, with solemn warning, irregularities, and vices, that appear to be increasing ;—and of urgently recommending virtues, that seem not duly to be regarded, or to be on the decline.

It is always useful too, to take advantage of any striking or affecting accident, or occurrence, which may have happened among your Congregation, or in your neighbourhood ;—or of any public event, that may have excited feeling, or given birth to reflection. In these cases, the mind is better prepared and opened, for the reception of the good seed, and it may therefore thus be sown with the fairer prospect of success.

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In these matters,—as in all others,—you will do well to keep in mind, and to be governed by, the example of our Saviour : who always regarded the situation, and habits, of the persons he addressed ;—who made continual allusion to incidents, as they occurred,—and even to the objects, by which he happened to be surrounded ;—and adapted his teaching both to the faults, and defects,—and to the particular circumstances, and wants, of those who heard him.

I will conclude what I had to say, relative to the choice of *subjects* for your Sermons, by again observing, that they should not only be selected to meet whatever more particularly calls for animadversion, instruction, or exhortation, in the character and conduct of your people ; but also to seize, and to apply to purposes of edification, whatever may be suited to such purposes in the circumstances, and occurrences, of the times, the country, and the neighbourhood in which you live :—most carefully, however, and scrupulously, guarding against the admission of every thing that might in reality be, or might appear to be, pointed against any individual ; or be, or seem to be, in any manner or degree, intentionally personal.

I would further recommend it to you never to omit the occasion which the celebration of the principal Festivals, or Fasts, affords, of explaining to your people, and endeavouring to impress upon their

their minds, the particular doctrine, instruction, or example, which it is the purpose of the Church, in these observances, to enforce. If this be omitted, your Congregation will be apt to impute it to indifference, or negligence :—if it be observed, they will give your Discourse a willing, and respectful attention ; and scarcely fail to receive some spiritual advantage from it. The Gospels, and Epistles, and the Lessons of the day, afford also subjects for the Pulpit, which, I believe, never fail to be acceptable to the people, and, when competently treated, to dispose them to a favourable opinion of the judgment, and capacity, as well as of the zeal, and diligence of their Pastor : and I need not observe that this opinion will in a high degree contribute to the success of all your endeavours.

Thus much, for the choice of subjects. With respect to the *manner* of preaching, a great deal might be said ;—for it offers a wide field for observation : but it is a matter of nice and difficult management : I will comprise what I wish to suggest to you upon it, in as few words as I can. Under this head are to be classed, the Composition, and the Delivery, of your Sermons.

The preaching of written Discourses, has many advantages ; and they are so obvious, that I do not think it necessary to take up your time in enlarging upon them. But there is one advantage of
preaching

preaching without Notes, which it would be well if you could transfer, to the habit of preaching with them : I mean the advantage of using language easy to be understood.

In written language, even where there is a desire to be perfectly intelligible, there is too often, from the greater elevation of stile, from the inverted collocation of words, and from the length, and complexity of sentences, a degree of obscurity, which renders the sense doubtful, to plain, unlettered persons, and sometimes places it entirely out of the reach of their minds.

I therefore strongly recommend it to you, to use plain language,—(I do not mean, as you will suppose, low, or vulgarly familiar language),—with as little inversion, and involution, as possible ; and without any mixture, of what the people call hard words—words derived from other tongues, and not in ordinary use :—For tho' these may be proper, in productions, where elegance or loftiness of stile, are expected, and required, they are out of their place, when you are addressing persons of humble station, and limited intelligence ;—upon topics too, of vital importance ;—from which they can derive little benefit, if they do not distinctly comprehend you.

To be *intelligible*, is, (to use a familiar phrase), a sine qua non. You should studiously sacrifice the

pride of skilful composition, the taste for elegant, and polished diction, the love of graceful arrangement, and of well rounded periods, to the wiser, and better ambition, of being distinctly understood.

There are however some of the best qualities of correct Writing, which instead of tending to perplex the minds of your hearers, will be great helps to them, both in seizing your meaning, and in keeping it in memory. Such are, method, perspicuity, and an adherence,—even a rigorous adherence,—to the subject of your Text. I might enlarge upon these points :—but it cannot be necessary :—you can be at no loss fully to understand my meaning ; and will, I hope, concur with me ; and regulate your practice accordingly.

With respect to the *Delivery* of your Sermons,—it would be difficult to lay down rules, that might be so clear in their application, as to be in any considerable degree useful.

I must confess my own opinion is, that many of the Clergy of our Church,—whether from a delicacy of mind, that makes them fearful of appearing to assume a pompous, or theatrical tone, and manner ; or from a dread, (weakly entertained I think), of being suspected of imitating, or of being thought to resemble, enthusiastic, and methodistical Preachers,—if they are energetic, or earnest, in their manner ;—or, from whatever other cause,—many of our
Clergy,

Clergy, are too indifferent,—too little ambitious to excel,—where excellence is so pre-eminently beneficial,—too tame, and inanimate, in their addresses to their people.

Yet, if he, who speaks, appear to take small interest in what he says, how can he expect that great interest should be excited in the minds of those who hear him. If he suffer himself to appear cold, and to become dull, how can he reasonably hope to warm, and move the hearts of others? If it be not evident, that his own mind is penetrated, with the importance of what he is teaching, how can he think to penetrate the hardened, or the wayward mind, of the habitual, or the heedless sinner?

It must be admitted, that here, as in all other cases, talents are unequally bestowed. Nature does much more, in this respect, for some than others. But, to have a just, and feeling sense, of the importance of the duty to be performed;—to have the heart in that duty;—to have a sincere, an affectionate, a pious desire, to promote the salvation of souls;—will go far, to enable the man, least favoured by nature, (if he be otherwise duly qualified), to surmount all ordinary impediments, and to preach the Gospel with effect.

Who is there, that in urging any point, in which his own feelings are deeply concerned, or which nearly touches the interests, or the safety of those whom

whom most he loves,—who is there, that does not speak with energy, or pathos?—with that native eloquence, which as it comes from the heart, seldom fails to reach the hearts, of all to whom it is addressed? So will it be with him, who, with like interest, preaches the word of God.

But if we suppose obstacles, of the most discouraging nature, arising from feelings not easily excited, or from painful diffidence, or insurmountable shyness,—or any other disqualifying cause,—still, there are few men who are not able, if they choose to be at the pains, to speak with becoming gravity, deliberation, and distinctness. who may not, by careful, and persevering industry, divest themselves of any unnatural tone, or vicious mode of pronuntiation; who may not, by giving a frequent previous consideration to their Sermons, have every part of them so present to their minds, that tho' their delivery be but reading, it will still approach the natural tones of speech.

This degree of proficiency every man may attain, who will sincerely labour to attain it: and if that which must constitute so main a part of his usefulness in his ministry, be not, in his estimation, worthy of such labour, it would be difficult to conjecture what he would consider to be so.

What I have now said respecting the manner in which Sermons should be read, will apply, I think
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even with augmented force, to the manner of reading the Liturgy.

Weighty as is your subject, yet still when you preach, you speak to men : when you read the Liturgy, you address yourselves to God. You are the organ, of the Prayers, of all. In the presence, of the all-wise, all-powerful, and all-holy Creator, you plead, for his dependent, and offending creatures :—your voice is the voice of the assembled people :—you offer to their God, their humble penitence, their fervent supplications, their grateful thanksgivings :—you express,—to Him,—their fears, their wants, their hopes, their piety, their faith :—Thro' you, they present to God their Saviour, their petition for all spiritual blessings, necessary to their salvation ; for all temporal mercies, conducive to their peace : and, in his name, and by his authority, you pronounce the pardon, of the sins which they confess, and abjure.

How awful is this privilege !—How exalted are the functions you perform !—It is not in the power of thought, to place a human being in a position more solemn, more affecting, more calculated to fill the heart with the deepest feelings of adoration, hope, and trust ; of piety to God, and love to man.

Is *this* an office to be hurried over, with an appearance of careless disregard ?—or to be performed with a merely decent degree of serious attention ?

tion? I trust you estimate it in a different manner. Yet nothing can be more clear,—(I make the observation, my Reverend Brethren, with reluctance, and regret),—nothing can be more clear, than that, with many people, the Prayers of the Church are considered as a tedious, or, at least as no very interesting, or important part of the Service:—they come to them late; they go thro' them with but little appearance of reverent devotion; and when there is no Sermon, or Lecture, there are but few who come at all.

Do they *forget*, that the Lord's Day, (to say nothing of other days, solemnly to be observed by the Church,) is set apart *for* the *Worship* of Almighty God?—Do they forget, that the Church is the place, expressly dedicated to the purpose, of offering their public adorations, to his Divine Majesty?—Do they forget, that the *main object* of their attendance in that Church, is, humbly to confess their offences to God?—to receive,—if this be done with true contrition,—the assurance of his pardon,—the absolution of their sins?—to unite in Prayer, and Praise?—to hear the word of life, in the selected Lessons, the Epistles, and Gospels, of the day?—and to seek, and find, that spiritual comfort, that assisting grace, of which these services are the appointed means; and without which, tho' they may deem themselves Religious, their Religion must be vain?

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If *they do forget* these things, I fear,—I fear, my Reverend Brethren,—it must be, because they are not *duly remembered* by those, who are appointed to perform this Service ;—because it is too often performed with less solemnity, less feeling, less devotion, than it ought.

Be not therefore surprised, that I exhort you carefully to consider this subject ; and to use your best ability, to lead the Devotions of your Congregation, with impressive, recollected, and judicious zeal :—neither cold, nor languid, on the one hand, nor vehement, and enthusiastic, on the other ; but serious, humble, fervent, and sincere.

Doing this,—you will satisfy your own consciences ; you will edify, and comfort your people ; and your Churches will not be deserted for the Meeting-house.

There are two branches of duty, common to all Parochial Ministers, which I will barely mention, before I proceed to another part of my subject, because, altho' too important to be passed in silence, they are too obvious to require prolonged discussion. I mean, Catechising children, and Visiting the sick. You cannot avoid seeing, that, by omitting the first, you would lose the best, perhaps the only opportunity you possess, of impressing upon the minds of youth, the simple elements of Christian knowledge, and the plain precepts of
Religious

Religious duty,—and thereby render yourselves responsible, for the ignorance of first principles, the perverseness of opinion, and the obliquity of conduct, in their future lives, which will inevitably flow from the want of early instruction :—and by neglecting the latter, you would forego the most favourable occasion of impressing the necessity of Repentance, and Belief ; of carrying to the heart subdued by sickness, a strong feeling of the importance of Religion ; of awakening it to an alarming sense of the consequences of sin ; of softening the obdurate, confirming the wavering, and comforting the penitent ; of pouring into the willing mind that pious instruction, and of pressing upon it that seasonable exhortation, which might render contrition effectual, and,—if time be given,—reformation complete.

Very precious are such occasions :—and lukewarm indeed in Christian sentiment, and hard of heart, must that Minister of the Gospel be, who can incur the blame of wilfully neglecting them.

I now come to advert to duties, which are more or less connected with your peculiar situation.

The imperfect state of our Establishment, tends, in a considerable degree, to diminish the influence of the Clergy, as a body ; and, as individuals, places some obstacles in their way, which under
more

more favourable circumstances would either not occur at all, or would be easily surmounted.

What these are,—you feel :—I need not dwell upon them. I trust that the goodness of God will gradually remove them.

In the mean time, the servants of Christ are not to suffer themselves to be discouraged. His Church may have difficulties to encounter, may suffer occasional depression, but it will never be overthrown : “ The Gates of Hell shall not prevail “ against it.” Assured of this, it is the part of those, who have the honour to be Ministers of that Church, under adverse circumstances, to “ fight, “ the good fight of Faith” : secure, in doing so, of effectual support.

You must experience, I am aware, my Reverend Brethren, certain privations, and discouragements ;—and, among these, that of being, for the most part, widely separated from each other, and of thereby losing the assistance, and comfort, that might be derived from mutual counsel, and support. But there is One, who, in your sincere endeavours to do your duty, “ will never leave you, “ nor forsake you” ;—One, whose “ strength, will “ be made perfect, in your weakness.” And amid the most doubtful, and most painful labours, you may be cheered by the reflection, that the more arduous the trials are to which you are exposed,

the greater will be the recompence of persevering fidelity.

It is a fashion among many, in these times, and in this country, to look without respect, to the most venerable Institutions, and even to question the validity of the most sacred Ordinances.

Who does not know, the proneness of mankind, to rush into extremes ?

Freed as the Church of England is from all burthensome exterior observances, one would think that her simple, yet expressive, and dignified Institutions, might find favour with all, who will admit that the visible Church of Christ cannot exist, without the use of the Sacraments ; without an order of men, duly appointed to minister those Sacraments ; without certain exterior Forms, of Public Worship ; and certain Rules, of Government, and Discipline.

But if in former times men relied too much upon the virtue, and efficacy of exterior ordinances, and in that reliance lost sight of a due regard to the spiritual character of the Christian Worship, not only is that error sufficiently exploded, but we are in danger of embracing error of a contrary kind.

There is, in the temper of the times, and among ourselves, not merely a contempt for superstitious pageantry,

pageantry, and an abhorrence of spiritual usurpation,—the natural results of the unfettered exercise of reason,—but a dangerous disposition to shake off all respect, for all established authorities, however venerable for their antiquity, just in their principles, and wise, and liberal, in their constitution, and government. There is a scepticism, capable of withholding its assent from the expediency, and the duty, of conforming to Rites, practised, and therefore forever consecrated as a part of our Religion, by the Apostles of Christ: nay,—worse than this,—there is an audacity, which questions the necessity even of those Rites, which were instituted by Jesus Christ himself.

From the situation of these Provinces, and the various origin, and mixed character of the persons who inhabit them, and from the constant intercourse with a neighbouring country, in which much laxity of Religious opinion is known prevail, there is great room to fear, that we are not a little infected with loose notions upon the subjects just mentioned; and cannot rely with security upon any general attachment to our Church.

In this case, what is it that we have to do?—to fold our arms in passive acquiescence?—to give way to indifference, or disgust?—or to throw up our cause in despair?—God forbid!—As it is the bounden duty, so should it be the fixed determination, of the Clergy of that Church, which, with
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the form, has preserved the purity, of the earliest Christian Churches, to “contend earnestly for the “Faith that was once delivered to the Saints.”—Knowing well, the value of their sacred Institutions, and loving, as they know them, they must surely feel the duty of defending them, tho’ with becoming moderation, yet, with unshaken constancy; tho’ with Christian charity, and Christian meekness, yet with undeviating, and unblenching resolution.

In this spirit, you will endeavour to guard your people not only against errors, which are the produce of your own soil, and which gain strength from the natural habits of yet unsettled life, but against those loose opinions also, that are the growth of other lands, and that by contiguity, and intermixture, are easily disseminated, and readily take root, and grow amongst us.

Circumstanced as you are, my Reverend Brethren, it will not be sufficient, that you discharge, with punctuality, the regular, and stated offices of your respective Cures,—you must enlarge the Pastoral functions, and be solicitous not only duly to feed the sheep of Christ, but to reclaim them from their wanderings; to watch over their regimens; and to acquire skill to medicate the disorders, which they may unhappily contract.

For these exertions, you will, I hope, find amply
sufficient

sufficient motives, in your own sense of duty, and in your faithful devotion to your Master's service : But other motives may be mentioned, which,—~~tho'~~ tho' of much inferior moment,—are still by no means unworthy of subordinate regard.

In the yet inefficient state of the provision made by Parliament for the support of a Protestant Clergy in this country, the means of that support are piously, and nobly supplied by the Sovereign, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

That gracious Sovereign, and that venerable Society,—the Government of England,—and the Parent State itself,—the Governments of these Provinces,—and the worthy, wise, and good among the people, have their eyes upon you.—It is the general expectation, that an abundant harvest is to spring from the Seed, which you have thus been appointed, and enabled to sow.—Something of high import to your Country, and yourselves, is anxiously looked for, in evidence, of the just estimation, in which the protection that you have received is held by you ; and of your sincere devotion to the cause, in which you have engaged.—God grant that these may be manifested, in the spiritual improvement, the corrected morals, and the steady loyalty, of the people committed to your charge!

In considering the most probable means of producing

ducing these effects, I should *recur*, first, to the preaching of the whole Gospel of Christ :—and secondly, to contending,—as occasion shall require,—against the extension of Heresy, and Schism.

I have already made some observations, respecting the manner in which the Gospel is to be preached ;—but I must, notwithstanding, at the hazard of some repetition, remind you, (with reference to the point which I am now treating), that to preach the Gospel, in the estimation of the Church of England, whatever may be pretended by adversaries without, or by weak brethren within her pale, is to preach Redemption :—the doctrine of Atonement ; the satisfaction made for sinners by the blood of Christ :—It is, to lay open the corruption of human nature ; the insufficiency of man, unassisted by Divine Grace, for any thing that is good ; the efficacy of the prayer of faith ; and the purifying, directing, sustaining, and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Ministers of our Church, are frequently accused of neglecting, these essential, and vital parts of Christianity : and to such accusations, I cannot consider silence to be a satisfactory, or sufficient answer.

There are Words, I am aware, that carry with them a sort of charm, in the present day, by which the faculty of reason, and the principle of duty,

duty, are so perverted, or benumbed, that men are brought to think, when various, and contradictory opinions on Religious subjects generally prevail, that the safest, and the wisest thing that can be done, is to remain tranquil, and let each opinion take its course, without gainsaying, or disturbance. The potent Words are these—"an *enlightened* attachment to civil, and religious *Liberty* :—an enlarged, and generous *Liberality* of sentiment :"—Good things these, no doubt, in themselves, and when clearly understood, and correctly applied ; but singularly apt to bewilder weak heads, and to inflame tempers, naturally ambitious, and impatient of all wholesome, and legitimate restraint. If you "love the praise of men," you will be tempted, to yield to this delusive influence ;—but where then will be your regard to the charge of the Apostle, to the Minister of Christ's Religion, that he "take heed to himself, and to the doctrine" ? where will be your observance of his Exhortation, to maintain both the *purity*, and the *unity*, of the Faith ; and stedfastly to adhere to the "*Form of sound words*," in which that "Faith was first delivered to the Saints" ?

Liberality of sentiment, upon Religious subjects, is truly lovely, and respectable, when it is guided by clear views, and placed under the regulation of a just restraint : but unrestrained, or ill-conceived, it is not only an unsteady, but a dangerous guide.

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It is trite to observe,—but it should, nevertheless, be carefully remembered by every true friend to our Religious Establishment,—that as Political Liberty, unless it be watchfully guarded, is prone to exceed its just limits, and degenerate into Licentiousness, so Liberality in Religion, which *disregards* that *uniformity of plan*, on which the *Church of Christ* was founded,—is generally observed to unite itself with laxity of principle, to plunge into all the uncertainty of doubt, and to merge, at last, in profligate indifference.

Tenderness of disposition,—it may be said,—friendly motives of personal regard, respect for the sentiments, and feelings of others, (and more especially in matters in which conscience is concerned,) indulgence for the errors incident to human weakness,—these, and other like considerations, may, and indeed must, render it more or less painful, to impugn the tenets, and conduct of others ; or even decidedly to defend our own :—Be it so :—but are we therefore to *desert* our *cause* ; and *set aside* our *duty*, as *Ministers of the Church* ?

We are, for the most part, the persons attacked. Where is the fold, into which, under the pretence that the appointed Shepherd is not faithful to his trust, unauthorized, and ill-instructed Teachers, do not endeavour to intrude themselves ; calumniating the conduct of the regular Clergy, and tearing asunder, the bonds of union, between the Pastor, and his people ?

Is

Is there a want of charity, or liberality,—in considering this, to be a crying evil ; and in strenuously endeavouring to resist its progress ?—Then was St. Paul,—the eloquent Eulogist of *charity*,—the most *uncharitable*, and the most *illiberal* of men !

Believe me, my Reverend Brethren, it is our duty to our Divine Master, and to that Church, whose Constitution we have most solemnly pledged ourselves to maintain, to meet, and disprove, the accusations brought against us, as unsound Ministers of the Gospel :—to meet them,—with temper, and fairness, certainly ;—but with firmness, and decision :—to disprove them, by clear, and candid reasoning, and by sound, and scriptural Doctrine.

God forbid, that I should encourage you to any breach of charity ; to any violation of gentleness, or candour :—I have not so far lost sight of the sentiments, which I forme'y recommended to your attention :—but when our Doctrine is misrepresented, and our mode of teaching vilified ; when our people are not only seduced from us, but taught to believe that we do not preach the Gospel of Christ ;—can we, if we contend against the mischief, be justly censured, as narrow-minded bigots ?—No, surely : Censure, can only justly attach to those, who compel us to the contest.

If we were voluntary, and unprovoked aggressors, we might indeed expose ourselves to rebuke : but surely we may stand, unblamed, on our defence ; and may unblamed refute the accusations, so unreasonably brought against us. This is, indeed, so clear, that to deny it, would be virtually to assert, that to uphold the modes of faith which men profess, and the soundness of the doctrines they maintain, are subjects, only to be touched by our adversaries ; subjects sacred, in their hands ;—in the hands of all others, illiberal, oppressive, and unchristian !

In discussions of this sort, our exertions, should be proportioned to our danger : We should not spare to declare the whole truth : We should take, and maintain, the high, and strong position, of the Apostolic Institution of our Church : We should call the evidence of History to our aid : We should insist upon the uniform practice of the Church, for many ages : We should shew, that we derive our authority to “ preach the Gospel, “ and minister the holy Sacraments in the Congregation,” from the Apostles themselves.

The people will find no difficulty in understanding this, if it be properly explained to them.

We are able to exhibit our Credentials, as “ *Am-
bassadors for Christ*” :—Let the adversaries, who would force themselves into our office, and who pretend

pretend to a like authority, produce *their* Commission :—let them shew something, beyond their own assertion, to prove, that they act *for Him*, by *his authority*.

A spirit of indulgence, and conciliation, is natural, no doubt, to the most amiable minds : but, like many other qualities, it is not only weak, but productive of much mischief, when it is carried to excess. Under a vain imagination, that they are winning men over to be favourably disposed to the Church, such persons unthinkingly throw open a door, through which many are daily seduced to forsake it.

A similar error is that, by which members of our Church are induced to unite themselves, and to form one body, with persons, really hostile to her Ecclesiastical Institutions, (and whose vigilance to take occasion of undermining them never sleeps,) whenever they imagine that they see means of promoting objects, which they suppose likely to advance Religion, generally ; tho' the very same objects, might be as effectually, and more safely, and more wisely promoted, in union with, and under the exclusive conduct, of their own body. They do not consider, how easily, and to what extent, the arms which they thus freely furnish, may be turned against themselves. They do not reflect, that when we act as if we did not ourselves consider

sider the differences between us, and those that are without, as being really essential, we become virtually advocates of Schism, and depreciators of our own Establishment.

But, whatever may be thought, in this matter, with respect to Laymen, such conduct as this, in you, my Reverend Brethren, would be nothing less than a manifest desertion of an imperious duty.

Our blessed Saviour, *fervently prayed*, for the *Unity* of the Church, which he formed upon the earth. What are we to understand by this *Unity*? A general consent, merely, in the belief, that Jesus is the Christ?—Is *this* all?—If it be, we must endeavour to reconcile the ideas, of absolute Unity, and infinite Diversity.

The Apostles of Christ also earnestly exhorted the Church to preserve “the unity of the Spirit, “in the bond of Peace.” Does this mean, that it matters not how discordant our opinions, and professions are, provided we do not contend about them?—How does St. Paul convey *his* sense, of the meaning of such *unity*?—“Now I beseech “you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus “Christ, that *you all speak the same thing* : and “that there be *no divisions* among you : but that “ye be *perfectly joined together*, in the *same mind*, “and in the *same judgment*.” And again, “us

“ us walk by the *same Rule* : let us mind the *same thing*.”—(1 Cor. 1, 10.—3 Phil. 16.—1 Tit. 9.)

Shall we then look without concern at the alarming progress of *Schism* : and “ lay that flattering “ unction to our soul,” that we are evincing a freedom from narrow prejudices, and a superiour liberality of mind, by extending the fullest indulgence to innovation, and division ; and by actually mixing ourselves, in the proceedings of those, whose first object it is to promote them ?—Shall we fondly persuade ourselves, that we demonstrate our *Charity*, by an indolent forbearance from all efforts, to support our Church, and vindicate the Divine origin of her Institutions, and the purity, and integrity, of her Doctrine, and her Discipline ? How lamentably inconsistent would this be, with the engagement into which we all enter, at our Ordination ; when, “ in the name of God, and of “ his Church,” we solemnly pledge ourselves,—as you must well remember,—“ to be *ready, with all “ faithful diligence, to banish, and drive away, all “ erroneous, and strange doctrines, contrary to “ God’s word.*”

I place this before you, then, as your acknowledged, and your bounden duty.

To give any particular directions, as to the manner in which this is to be executed, would, upon
this

this occasion, be impracticable, and if it were practicable, would not be necessary.

Every man must be left to the exercise of his own judgment, in this matter : and to that, I am satisfied, I may safely refer you.

I have thought it my duty, to call your attention to the general principle :—the application of what I have said, to particular circumstances, and to events as they may occur, must be made by yourselves.

It is time that I draw to a conclusion :—and I will close what I have been last urging, by observing, that, whatever a fictitious liberality may say, nothing is so destructive of Charity, as Schism.

That Evangelical Charity, which glowed in the breast of St. Paul,—of which he gives so beautiful a description, and which he expressly prefers even to Hope, and Faith,—that very Charity it was, which prompted him, resolutely to encounter Heresy ; severely to reprove the spirit of Division ; and to class Schism, among offences of the deepest die.

Animated by his example, be ye watchful, not to let Indifference, and a desire of Ease, impose themselves upon you, for Moderation, and a love of Peace :—be watchful, not to suffer Timidity, to assume the garb of Charity.

Charity,

Charity, will inspire you with inexhaustible energy in the cause of Truth ; will make you vigilant to discover, and “ ready, with all faithful diligence, to drive away,” all heretical error, that may invade your flock ; and will prepare you to sacrifice the praise of *liberality*, to a just sense of your sacred duty, and the safety of the souls, committed to your care.

Weigh well, my Reverend Brethren, the superiour advantages you possess ; and be studious to make the most of those advantages. Be ye “ burning, and shining Lights,” in the world :—Lights, “ burning” with holy zeal for the salvation of souls ; “ shining,” (under the guidance of the Spirit), with superiour knowledge : by a clear exposition of the Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel, enlightening your hearers ; by the earnestness of your exhortations, and the influence of your example, warming them, to the love, and the practice of their duty.

You are “ Stewards of the Mysteries of God” :—

“ Now it is required of Stewards, that a man be “ found faithful.”

You are the Ministers of Religion, according to the Establishment of the Church of England :—

“ Keep that, which is committed to your charge.”
Do

Do you ask, "who is sufficient for these things"?

"You know, in whom you have believed."

You know, that, if you duly seek it, "*his* strength
"will be sufficient for you."

What if your sacred office demands unremitted
vigilance in feeding the flock of Christ?

"Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when
"he cometh shall find so doing."

What if your labours are arduous, and manifold?

"They that turn many to righteousness, shall
"shine as the stars, for ever, and ever."

What if your situation be retired, and obscure :
offering little that can promise distinction, or gra-
tify the desires of ambition?

Look to *Him*, who has, thus, promised to re-
ceive those, whose first object it is, faithfully to
employ the talents which he hath entrusted to
their use :

"Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou
"hast been faithful over a few things, I will make
"thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into
"the joy of thy Lord."

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